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United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) develops the capacities of individuals, organizations and institutions, largely in developing countries, to enhance global decision-making and to support country-level action for shaping a better future. The Institute focuses on two sets of targeted beneficiaries: the delegates and other actors who are engaged in intergovernmental processes to establish norms, standards, policies and procedures in areas of concern to the United Nations; and the key stakeholders at the national and local levels who work to translate multilateral agreements into concrete action.

Under the present 2014-2017 strategic framework, the Institute works in six broad programming areas: strengthening multilateralism, promoting economic development and social inclusion, advancing environmental sustainability and green growth, promoting peace, improving resilience and humanitarian assistance, and strengthening the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The results of implementation of the framework through the end of 2016 are encouraging, with the Institute having provided learning, training and related knowledge-sharing services to over 120,000 individuals in all Member States. These outputs were achieved through the delivery of 1,418 events, 69 per cent of which were designed around specific learning objectives and 31 per cent of which comprised broader knowledge-sharing events such as conferences, side events and public lectures.

In preparation for its next strategic framework, covering the period 2018-2021, UNITAR is engaged in consultations with its Board of Trustees and other key stakeholders on how to best position the Institute in order to make a meaningful, cost effective and impactful contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. UNITAR has laid the groundwork for this planning exercise, which has resulted in a six-point vision statement, focusing on growth, modernization, innovation, quality assurance, visibility, and openness and inclusivity.

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The financial performance of UNITAR reflects stability and modest growth. Total income for the biennium ending 31 December 2015 was $54.2 million, marking a 25 per cent increase over the 2012-2013 figure of $43.3 million. The Institute has made noteworthy progress on reversing the trend of declining non-earmarked contributions to the general fund, with the generous support of the Government of Algeria.

The Secretary-General recommends that Member States commend the Institute for its growth in beneficiaries since 2014 and welcome the new strategic direction that UNITAR is taking in order to make a meaningful, cost-effective and impactful contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Secretary-General also recommends that UNITAR continue its efforts to respond to learning and other capacity needs in accordance with its mandate and the outcomes of relevant international conferences, including, in particular, the 2030 Agenda; the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa in July 2015; the twenty-first and twenty-second sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Paris and Marrakech, Morocco, respectively; and the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015. The Secretary-General further recommends that Member States and other stakeholders, including relevant United Nations entities, strengthen partnerships with the Institute, given its expertise in the fields of learning, applied research and satellite mapping.

I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) is a dedicated training arm of the United Nations. With the aim of strengthening the effectiveness of the Organization, the Institute's mission is to develop the capacities of individuals, organizations and institutions, primarily in developing countries, to enhance global decision-making and to support country-level action for shaping a better future.

2. In pursuit of that mission, the Institute places great emphasis on the delivery of learning-related products and services, with the goal of bringing about changes in behaviour, enhancing on-the-job performance and developing other capacities of its beneficiaries, be they individuals or organizations. Parallel to its learning-specific services, the Institute also engages in training-related, research and advisory services to support Governments and other actors in the achievement of broader social and economic outcomes, such as strengthened multi-stakeholder participation in decision-making, early ratification and implementation of environmental agreements and enhanced coordination of relief by humanitarian agencies in the wake of natural disasters.

3. On 1 October 2015, a new Executive Director of the Institute was appointed following a three-year transitional period in leadership. The appointment coincided with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Institute's 2016-2017 programme budget covering the second half of the 2014-2017 strategic framework. In preparing the budget's results framework, UNITAR undertook an alignment exercise, matching proposed programming with the 2030 Agenda, and found that many areas were aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, with 14 of the 17 Goals covered. UNITAR also revised its strategic framework to include a sixth high-level programme area focusing on strengthening the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and developing the capacity of national partners as they explore the new agenda, internalize and mainstream it through their own national policies, programmes and plans, and monitor and evaluate progress. Section II of the present report provides an update on the key achievements in the implementation of the framework, with data and information provided through the end of 2016.

4. The 2030 Agenda provides an undeniable opportunity to bring about widespread and positive change for humanity. UNITAR is engaged in consultations with its Board of Trustees and other key stakeholders on how to best position the Institute's assets in order to make a meaningful, cost-effective and impactful contribution to the implementation of the Agenda, as well as the other major outcomes from 2015, including those of the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai, Japan; the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Paris; and the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa. Section III will present the results of these initial consultations.

5. Section IV addresses the financial situation of the Institute, which is marked by sustained levels of income and a reversal of the decline in non-earmarked voluntary contributions to the UNITAR General Fund. Finally, in section V, the report concludes with a recommendation that the Member States provide their full support to enable the Institute to continue efforts to meet learning and other capacity needs, in accordance with its mandate and strategic framework, and that Member States and other stakeholders, including relevant United Nations entities, strengthen partnerships with the Institute, given its learning-related expertise.

II. Progress in implementing the 2014-2017 strategic framework

6. During the 2014-2015 biennium, the Institute provided training and knowledge-sharing services to 73,610 beneficiaries, representing the largest outreach ever recorded in its history. UNITAR delivered a total of 962 events, equivalent to some 4,301 event-days, 88 per cent of which were designed to have specific learning outcomes. Individuals from all United Nations Member States benefited from UNITAR services, with 80 per cent of training-related beneficiaries coming from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East, and more than half representing national, state and local government sectors. Through its Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT), UNITAR produced 628 maps and reports in 2014-2015 to support the international humanitarian community in decision-making and operational coordination in the field.

7. The Institute primarily targets beneficiaries from developing countries, with 77 per cent of training-related beneficiaries coming from such countries (and 32 per cent of all beneficiaries coming from the least-developed countries in 2014-2015, similarly to in 2012-2013). The female-to-male gender ratio among the Institute's training-related beneficiaries was 35:65 (and 43:57 when not including beneficiaries from UNITAR peacekeeping-related programming, which is aimed at male peacekeepers from African countries).

8. Feedback from beneficiaries continues to be positive, with 92 per cent of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that training has been useful overall. The Institute also regularly measures post-training application and transfer of knowledge and skills. Based on a random sample of approximately 3,000 participants from learning events held in 2015, 79 per cent confirmed having applied knowledge or skills to their respective workplaces.

9. The third year of the Institute's 2014-2017 strategic framework was marked by a notable increase in the number of beneficiaries compared with previous years. UNITAR provided training and knowledge-sharing services in 2016 to 54,840 individuals, representing a 28 per cent increase over 2015 figures. This increase was primarily the result of the further development of the online introductory course on climate change (now available in English, French and Spanish) and the delivery of the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance programme in Africa, through which 8,800 and 12,946 participants were trained, respectively. Approximately 34,000 participants in the Institute's overall beneficiary outreach took part in specific learning-related events, representing a 36 per cent increase over 2015 figures. Eighty per cent of the Institute's training-related beneficiaries in 2016 came from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East.

10. The Institute has taken a number of concrete steps to enhance gender mainstreaming and promote the empowerment of women. In addition to including in the budget specific programming areas related to these objectives (e.g. empowering women in decision-making and leadership and building the capacity of women to promote tsunami-based disaster risk reduction), the Institute has identified gender parity of beneficiaries (with the exception of its peacekeeping training, which continues to be aimed at male military and police personnel) as one of the corporate key performance indicators for 2016. With the actual 2016 female-to-male ratio (without including beneficiaries from peacekeeping training) falling short of this target, at 44:56, UNITAR will continue efforts to reach its gender parity target for 2017. To help promote gender dimensions in programming and operations, the Institute has established a policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women and has been contributing since 2015 to the annual reporting exercise under

the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. The Executive Director also participates in the Geneva Gender Champions initiative, demonstrating a personal commitment to promoting gender parity.

11. The Institute's overall outputs in 2016 were produced with an annual budget of $25 million and through the delivery of 456 events, equivalent to 2,963 event-days, and a dynamic corps of engaged and motivated professionals. With a current female-to-male ratio of 42:58, UNITAR closely monitors its staff composition and is committed to ensuring broad geographical representation, with a view to promoting staff diversity. The Institute continues to engage a broad spectrum of interns, trainees and other collaborators in its programming and operations, with a view to supporting their career development and meeting organizational needs.

A. Strengthening multilateralism

12. Since the establishment of the Institute more than 50 years ago, strengthening the knowledge, skills and awareness of delegates to perform effectively in the United Nations arena has been an important and strategic dimension of UNITAR programming. With the primary objective to "level the playing field" between developed and developing country delegations, the Institute's core diplomatic training enhances delegates' understanding of the United Nations system, organs and procedures, strengthens diplomatic skills relevant to conferences and negotiations and supports efforts to build a more effective multilateral system. Through the organization of 41 core diplomatic training activities in Geneva, New York and Vienna, the Institute trained more than 1,567 delegates in 2015 and 2016. To complement its extensive suite of individual training events, UNITAR launched an executive diploma in diplomatic practice in 2015, enabling delegates based in Geneva to obtain recognition in the form of an executive-level diploma for successfully completing 10 core diplomatic training events within a year. Following the success of the first two editions, UNITAR launched a similar diploma programme in 2017 for the international community in Vienna.

13. As reported in 2015 (see E/2015/12), UNITAR established the Algerian Scholarship Fund in 2014 following a generous contribution from the Government of Algeria to support the strengthening of capacities of delegates from developing countries. This fund enabled the Institute to waive core fees for diplomatic training courses for 366 delegates from developing countries in Geneva and New York during 2015 and 2016; nearly half of the scholarship recipients were female and approximately one third were African. The fund complements the important support that the Government of Sweden has provided to sponsor the participation of developing countries in diplomatic training in New York, with some 431 delegates benefiting from training activities during 2015 and 2016.

14. As noted in the introduction to the present report, UNITAR is working to empower women in decision-making and has launched a women's leadership programme aimed at addressing the gender imbalance that exists in delegations to multilateral conferences. During 2015 and 2016, the programme trained more than 400 delegates through 11 activities implemented in partnership with diverse organizations, including the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

15. In addition to its core training curriculum at United Nations headquarters and offices, UNITAR continues to design customized training at the request of and/or in

partnership with ministries of foreign affairs, diplomatic academies and other ministries, including in Algeria, Japan, Mozambique, Myanmar, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates; United Nations agencies, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNDP, the United Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), ITU and WIPO; and international or regional organizations, including the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the International Organization of the Francophonie.

16. Supporting participation in climate change diplomacy in the lead-up to the twenty-first and twenty-second sessions of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change continued to be an important thematic area under strengthening multilateralism. During 2015-2016, UNITAR delivered climate change diplomacy training activities through both residential and e-learning courses, and developed the knowledge, skills and awareness of more than 400 government officers and other stakeholders on the substance, processes and procedures of the climate negotiations.

B. Promoting economic development and social inclusion

17. With a view to contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Institute continued to develop the knowledge and skills of trade- and finance-related stakeholders in the areas of poverty reduction, debt and prudent financial management, as well as in trade, regional integration and intellectual property for development. Over the course of 2015-2016, UNITAR trained some 3,937 government officials and other stakeholders in these subject areas, including over 1,500 government officials who were trained on best-practice issues concerning international trade and investment and regional integration. The Institute places emphasis on integrating quality, innovative and inclusive approaches such as training methodologies that are multilingual and based on information and communications technology for wider outreach, greater impact and cost-effectiveness. Specific focus has been placed on strengthening collaboration and partnership with relevant international and regional organizations in anglophone, francophone, Spanish-speaking and lusophone countries through joint work that leverages the respective comparative advantage and strengths of each institution.

18. As discussed in the 2015 report (E/2015/12), the Institute contributes to promoting youth employability through two specific initiatives. In close partnership with the Government of Algeria, UNITAR is implementing an entrepreneurship training programme for young graduates. Designed with a participatory approach, the programme includes a training-of-trainers component to ensure sustainability. More than 28 trainers have now been given the capacity to deliver training, and 300 young graduates have been trained by them. Four African countries have made requests to UNITAR regarding the possibility of organizing a programme based on the Algerian experience.

19. In a second initiative, designed and implemented in partnership with the Petroleum Technology Development Fund of Nigeria, UNITAR continues to empower Nigerian youth to be employable in the oil and gas industry in the Niger Delta. At the end of the three-year project, planned for December 2017, the Institute expects that 29 of the selected participants will have obtained degrees in petroleum technology from Stord/Haugesund University College (Norway) and be available for the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

20. Parallel to its engagement in important programming related to trade and youth employability, UNITAR continues to support the inscription process for World Heritage sites through its annual World Heritage nominations programme. Since its establishment in 2003, the programme has trained more than 400 professionals from 60 countries on the unique needs of World Heritage sites and on the nomination process. UNITAR partners with regional offices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as well as World Heritage advisory bodies, including the International Council on Monuments and Sites and the International Union for Conservation of Nature, to provide participants with the skills and knowledge required to develop more effective nomination dossiers and support a credible World Heritage List of well-managed properties of outstanding universal value.

21. The global network of affiliated International Training Centres for Local Authorities/Actors continues to serve as a unique and instrumental vehicle through which UNITAR is able to reach out to government officials and other stakeholders worldwide and increase its visibility and impact in a wide range of thematic areas related to governance and sustainable development. Over the past two years, the global network has grown to 16 centres, with the establishment of new ones in Buenos Aires; Manila; Newcastle, Australia; and Zurich, Switzerland. Over the course of 2014-2015, some 23,000 individuals benefited from the network's training and knowledge-sharing services.

22. In the field of international migration, UNITAR, with the support of the World Bank and other institutional partners, continues to lead a process by which municipal and regional authorities share best practices on governing mobility issues within urban centres. The third Mayoral Forum on Mobility, Migration and Development was held in Manila in June 2016 and advanced the "Call of Barcelona", in which cities around the globe stressed the need to provide greater voice and access to sub-national governments in decision-making circles related to migration. The Institute expects its role in supporting policy dialogues, providing capacity development to relevant stakeholders, advancing policy thinking on migration and its international implications, and facilitating access to new and emerging vectors of influence in an increasingly mobile world to be reaffirmed in 2017. The outcomes of the Mayoral Forum will continue to feed the Global Forum on Migration and Development and the International Organization for Migration Council. As part of the European Commission-United Nations Joint Migration and Development Initiative, UNITAR and its global network of affiliated International Training Centres for Local Authorities/Actors will continue to implement migration projects that support local development within communities at points of origin and destination of migration.

23. Building on global momentum towards sustainable and multipartner development, UNITAR, in collaboration with the city of Annemasse, France, created a public-private partnership platform to bring together actors from public-private partnerships and offer a space for learning and knowledge-sharing. The Platform is built on two components: (a) regular international events, bringing together actors from the public and private sectors, as well as from international organizations, financial institutions, civil society and academia, and (b) a virtual platform to continue exchanges started during the events and provide an interactive comprehensive repository of public-private partnerships for sustainable development. The first international forum brought together 600 participants and 45 speakers from five continents in October 2015.

24. In 2016, UNITAR launched a new initiative to contribute to response to the urgent need for action to curb road traffic casualties, which claim more than 1.2 million lives each year and represent the ninth leading cause of death across all

age groups globally and the leading cause among young people aged between 15 and 29 years. Reflecting the imperative to increase attention to road safety, the 2030 Agenda has set a goal of reducing road traffic deaths and injuries by 50 per cent by 2020. With a view to contributing to advancing this goal, UNITAR in 2016 launched its global Road Safety Initiative, placing priority on countries with the highest road traffic death rates, with a special focus on low-income countries, least developed countries and small island developing States.

C. Advancing environmental sustainability and green development

25. The Institute continues to contribute to building human and institutional capacities to overcome critical environmental challenges and promote low-carbon growth with a focus on activities in the areas of climate change, chemical and waste management and environmental governance.

26. The One United Nations Climate Change Learning Partnership continues to grow and evolve, in response to a strong signal from the international community, through the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, that education for climate change remains one of the key means of implementation of the Convention. As countries move towards the implementation of their climate action plans, they will need to consider their related skills development needs across the Government. The Partnership offers a process by which this issue can be addressed in a systematic way that is deeply embedded within the civil service culture and national training institutions. The reach of the programme has extended from five pilot countries to 16 countries based on clear and cross-government demand in each case. Funding for the programme has been secured up to 2020, providing the ability to leverage considerable co-financing through the United Nations system and countries themselves. The Partnership's e-learning platform continues to grow, with more than 70,000 registrants and courses now available in most official languages of the United Nations. The primary goal of the e-learning platform is to improve climate change literacy among engaged publics, including civil servants, non-governmental organizations, academia and students.

27. In the area of environmental governance and democracy, UNITAR, in partnership with UNEP, organized four regional workshops (in Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa) to raise awareness about the Guidelines for the Development of National Legislation on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Bali Guidelines) to promote the implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. Efforts to promote the implementation of Principle 10 continued, with the publication of "Putting Rio Principle 10 into action: an implementation guide". In response to requests from several countries to initiate the development of national strategies and legal reforms to implement Principle 10 and the Bali Guidelines, UNITAR and UNEP joined forces with UNDP, launching an inter-agency programme entitled "Strengthening capacities for rights-based, transparent and accountable environmental governance", with the aim of strengthening the development and implementation of legislation for effective participatory environmental governance and justice in developing countries. This programme will have multiple benefits across all Sustainable Development Goals, given the direct links between environmental governance, the lives and livelihoods of communities and the rights-based approach of the Agenda. UNITAR, UNDP and UNEP are seeking donors to fund the implementation of the programme.

28. The Institute's programming in the area of chemicals and waste management also continues to expand. In 2014, UNITAR launched a two-year initiative to support 15 countries in accelerating ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Funded by the Government of Switzerland, the initiative assisted countries to prepare ratification dossiers and identify actions for early implementation. In 2015-2016, the Government of Switzerland provided additional funding to include six additional countries in the initiative. To date, 13 countries have successfully prepared and submitted their ratification dossiers and eight have ratified the Convention. In 2015, UNITAR initiated a programme to support countries in developing their Minamata initial assessments, funded through the Global Environment Facility, in close coordination with UNDP, UNEP and UNIDO. More than 30 countries have benefited from this support, and 10 countries are entering into the final stage of the development of Minamata initial assessments. In 2016, UNITAR initiated the provision of support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea and Sierra Leone to develop Minamata initial assessments and national action plans on artisanal small-scale gold mining. UNITAR is currently coordinating global efforts to develop practical guidance on the formalization of such mining by focusing on providing better working conditions for informal gold miners and reducing their exposure to mercury.

29. In partnership with FAO, ILO, UNIDO, UNEP, WHO and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and with the support of the European Union, UNITAR is contributing to the expansion and promotion of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) toolbox to support the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. The toolbox is designed to provide improved access to tools developed by organizations participating in IOMC and to address national chemical management challenges at the country level. It is expected that in late 2017 a third phase of the project will commence, focusing on increased outreach and training.

30. Parallel to the capacity-development projects listed above, in 2015 UNITAR initiated a project in partnership with UNEP to assist Belarus, Cambodia, Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Peru and the Republic of Moldova in implementing their pollutant release and transfer registers; and in 2016 UNITAR trained 659 government officers and other stakeholders on the globally harmonized system for classifying and labelling chemicals and on mercury inventory development, through residential and online training.

D. Promoting sustainable peace

31. In the area of promoting sustainable peace, UNITAR has strengthened its high-level engagement activities with Member States, regional organizations and the United Nations. The Institute continued with the planning and facilitation of two high-level events, assembling the special and personal representatives and envoys of the Secretary-General for a seminar (which is now in its thirteenth year) and also assembling the outgoing, sitting and incoming African members of the Security Council, together with the chair of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and senior officials of the African Union Commission. Convened by Algeria and the African Union Commission, in collaboration with UNITAR, this second event provided an opportunity for participants to receive briefings from special envoys and representatives of the African Union on the current peace and security situation on the continent, as well as a brief overview of the challenges facing the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

32. As the initial concrete programme of the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Nations (2016-2020) and as announced by the Secretary-General at the eighth ASEAN-United Nations Summit, in 2016, the first UNITAR regional training programme in peacemaking and preventive diplomacy of the Asia-Pacific region was held in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Two ambassadors counted among the 43 mid-level and senior officials from each ASEAN member State who took part, as well as officials from Bangladesh, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste. The training programme included presentations of case studies and lessons learned from those involved in peacemaking and prevention efforts in a number of regions, as well as theory and practice sessions on conflict analysis, listening skills, negotiation and reconciliation. The sole female negotiator in the Bougainville peace process also took part and shared lessons from her involvement in the negotiations. Sessions focusing on enhancing the participation of women in peace processes and in social transformation through community mediation were also included.

33. The fifteenth continental training programme on enhancing conflict prevention and peacemaking in Africa was conducted in Addis Ababa in collaboration with the African Union. Thirty-one senior and mid-level officials from the offices of Presidents; ministries of foreign affairs, including a former foreign minister; the African Union; the Economic Community of West African States; and United Nations and African Union peace missions on the continent, strengthened skills in conflict analysis, negotiation, mediation and reconciliation.

34. Coinciding with the seventieth anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, UNITAR launched an annual training programme in Hiroshima on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in 2015, in collaboration with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Focusing on giving junior to mid-level diplomats a deep understanding of the current state of the nuclear debate, as well as detailed insight into the processes, protocols and procedures required at conferences on disarmament and non-proliferation, the programme trained 20 diplomats from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam in 2015 and 2016.

35. In the area of peacekeeping, UNITAR advances a capability-driven approach by means of a comprehensive range of training designed to prepare civilian, military and police personnel for deployment in conflict and post-conflict environments. With a view to increasing the capabilities of African military forces, UNITAR launched a series of intensive training events to support the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance Programme. Within that Programme, the Institute is responsible for the delivery of two orientation modules addressing both military officers and military contingents (non-commissioned officers). From January to December 2016, the Institute trained more than 12,000 beneficiaries in 24 sessions.

36. Building on these positive results and recognizing the lack of similar programmes for formed police units, the Institute has launched a project on sustaining peace in Mali and the Sahel region through strengthening regional peacekeeping training capacities. The project is aimed at contributing to international and regional efforts to sustain peace and security in Mali, by supporting the preparation of African formed police units prior to deployment to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. The proposal envisages a close collaboration between UNITAR and the School of Peacekeeping Alioune Blondin Beye, which in turn will lead to strengthened

capacities of the school to act as a centre of excellence for the preparation of military and police forces.

37. In the area of peacebuilding, UNITAR is strongly committed to supporting the global movement to promote the culture of peace. The Institute's contribution focuses on efforts to enhance the capacities of individuals, organizations and institutions, from the grass-roots to the policy level, to prevent and resolve violent conflicts and build sustainable peace. Building on activities implemented during 2014 and 2015, the Institute continues to develop innovative capacity-building approaches to contribute to the efforts of the international community to end the use of children as soldiers, such as the creation of comic books related to the challenges of reintegration and stigmatization of children formerly associated with armed groups and criminal gangs. The comic books, developed in collaboration with Don Bosco Colombia and endorsed by UNICEF, have paved the way for the delivery of training-of-trainer courses aimed at equipping educators and youth leaders with the skills to use this material for learning purposes.

38. Guided by the 2030 Agenda, the Institute endeavours to contribute to ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and promoting lifelong learning, through the delivery of four master's programmes (and related qualifications) in collaboration with prestigious academic institutions: a master's programme in conflictology, offered in partnership with the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya; a master's programme in humanitarian action and peacebuilding, offered in partnership with Oxford Brookes University; a master's programme in electoral policy and administration, offered in partnership with the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies in Pisa, Italy, and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance; and a master's programme in United Nations and the art of peace, offered in partnership with the Kyung Hee University and the World Federation of United Nations Associations.

39. Parallel to multiple initiatives in the fields of preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping, the Institute continued its efforts to contribute to the post-conflict recovery of governance in Afghanistan, Iraq and South Sudan. Since UNITAR initiated its efforts in 2003 in Afghanistan, more than 460 Afghan participants have taken part in the UNITAR fellowship programme for Afghanistan through training, coaching and mentoring strategies, with the broad objective of contributing to the organizational and human resource development of Afghan ministries and agencies. The fellowship, an on-the-job training programme delivered over a six-month period, features a blended approach, combining face-to-face training and coaching, webinars, audio seminars and needs-based project identification and development. Key in the 2016 cycle was a strategic review of the course material through an in-depth, needs-based analysis undertaken with local experts. As a result of this review, stakeholders identified good governance, the results framework, social entrepreneurship, social accountability and gender empowerment as topics to be included in the course material.

40. The fellowship is unique in that it incorporates selected graduates as junior faculty members in subsequent annual cycles, in order to provide indigenous insight, contextualization and buy-in. Such graduates, first assigned as coaches and then as Afghan resource persons, are provided additional training in coaching, mentoring and social entrepreneurship. In addition, one of the key elements of the fellowship is the pro bono mentoring of participants by senior professionals from around the globe. These mentors, experts in their own right, engage online with fellows on a monthly basis, providing guidance, insight and expertise, which results in the projects undertaken through the programme being developed indigenously yet also being simultaneously internationally reviewed. This further underscores the commitment of UNITAR and the fellowship to sustainable, indigenous capacity-

building for the country. The fellowship continues to be well supported from within Afghanistan, with networks of like-minded professionals developed through the intensive capacity-building process being seen as one of its key outcomes. Many graduates of the programme have become increasingly key decision makers within the public service and civil society. They include a member of parliament, as well as several directors general, vice-ministers and ministers.

41. Building on the Afghanistan fellowship model, UNITAR has developed annual six-month capacity-building training programmes for South Sudan and Iraq, with the support of the Government of Japan. The UNITAR fellowship programme for South Sudan began in 2015 and has completed two annual cycles, with 45 graduates from government and civil society organizations. The fellowship in South Sudan is tailored to the specific needs of the world's newest nation; the second cycle transitions, based on in-depth needs assessments and feedback from stakeholders, from project management to a focus on youth leadership and social entrepreneurship. Further building on lessons learned, the UNITAR fellowship programme for Iraq began in 2016 with 24 participants from the public sector, private sector, academic institutions and civil society organizations, and explores entrepreneurship and youth leadership in the context of Iraq. The fellowship programmes in South Sudan and Iraq also incorporate South-South cooperation, with mentors selected from the alumni community in Afghanistan, who volunteer their time, insight and expertise to support participants.

42. Further building on the Institute's capacity-strengthening efforts in Afghanistan and with a focus on gender empowerment, UNITAR has initiated a women's sports leadership training programme, based on the recognized benefits of female participation in sport when it comes to building self-esteem, facilitating social inclusion, challenging gender norms and providing opportunities for leadership and achievement. In 2015, with the support of the Women's Development Program of the United States Agency for International Development, the Afghanistan national women's football team undertook a weeklong training programme in Japan, which built the capacity of the team, on and off the field, through formal training and a sports exchange with a local Japanese women's soccer team. A second iteration of the programme, scheduled for implementation in March 2017, will focus on youth leadership for the U-18 (under the age of 18) category.

43. The Institute has extended its training in Africa to support regional efforts to fight corruption. Focusing on the building of multi-stakeholder coalitions, the six-month training programmes, supported by the Government of Japan, build the skills and knowledge of a regional network of selected professionals, emphasizing the important role of collaboration among Governments, civil society organizations and the media. The 2015 programme included 16 participants from eight countries in the Sahel region: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. The 2016 programme built upon the lessons learned and focused on North Africa, bringing together 24 participants from the public sector and civil society organizations in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

E. Improving resilience and humanitarian assistance

44. Benefiting from close collaboration with the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), the Institute, through UNOSAT, is actively engaged in efforts to improve resilience and humanitarian assistance. The work of UNOSAT places particular emphasis on geographic information systems (GIS) and satellite imagery, which are important tools for planning related to resilience and can provide timely and high-quality information to key decision makers in times of

humanitarian crises and natural disasters. With the aim of supporting the international humanitarian community with improved access to information for decision-making and operational coordination in the field, UNOSAT produced 333 maps and reports derived from satellite imagery in 2015, covering natural disasters and humanitarian crises, including the ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. At the request of the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for example, UNOSAT provided assessments of damage following the earthquake in Nepal and the conflict in South Sudan. UNOSAT also continued supporting the World Health Organization in the response to Ebola, providing up-to-date satellite imagery used for access to and planning of Ebola treatment centres and surrounding areas. Regarding the Syrian Arab Republic, UNOSAT continued to provide mapping to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian agencies, including with regard to monitoring under Security Council resolution 2139 (2014). In 2015, UNITAR signed a memorandum of understanding with UNESCO for the protection of cultural heritage sites by using satellite imagery and other related technologies. This close collaboration resulted in a joint publication on how UNOSAT satellite analysis, combined with UNESCO archaeological expertise, assesses vulnerable cultural heritage sites in Iraq, Nepal, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

45. In parallel to these activities, UNOSAT has been leading two noteworthy capacity-development projects to support the GIS-related capacities of Governments and organizations. In partnership with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and with support from the Government of Norway, UNOSAT is developing capacity in the use of geospatial technologies to address disaster risk reduction in the Horn of Africa region. The project strengthens technical knowledge and skills relating to the use of GIS and remote sensing technologies for disaster risk reduction to enhance planning, emergency preparedness and prevention across the region; raise awareness of geospatial technologies for disaster risk reduction and demonstrate how to use this information for coordination, dissemination and decision-making in the region; and improve the service delivery and data delivery of IGAD and its partners by developing an accessible geoportal. In 2015, East Africa experienced the El Niño phenomenon, which was closely monitored by the IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre with technical support from UNOSAT and harnessed the capacity built over the previous three years. This allowed for live web-based mapping of drought and potential flood conditions, combined with climate outlook forecasts for gap analyses and the provision of information for action at the national level.

46. With support from the Government of Switzerland, UNITAR is also working in partnership with the Government of Chad to increase its resilience to climate change through the development of sustainable management of water resources and surface aquifers using advanced GIS and satellite technology. Improved access to water will have a direct impact on health, food security, the fight against poverty and the development of village and rural communities. The goals of the project are to improve knowledge of water resources, to consolidate and develop initiatives in that sector, to strengthen national capacities in geology and GIS and to better manage groundwater and surface water. In 2015, the second phase of this ambitious project started, focusing on the production of numerous hydrogeological maps covering the central and western parts of the country. The transfer of knowledge to government offices responsible for hydrology and water resource monitoring included the establishment of a documentation centre for access to data, maps and literature about water resources in Chad. In connection with its various activities, UNOSAT has developed the knowledge and skills of 170 national and regional

experts on the use of GIS and satellite imagery for disaster risk reduction and response, and natural resources management.

47. The Institute has continued its research on advanced technology applications for participatory analysis and collaborative computing using distributed systems, the cloud and crowdsourcing methodologies. UNITAR, the University of Geneva and CERN have further increased their joint research effort by also scaling up the joint Citizen Cyberlab, which is now housed at the Campus Biotech in Geneva. The Centre acts as a technology lab, hosting researchers working on web-based applications that are pertinent to the activities of the three founding partners: e-health, particle physics and satellite imagery analysis.

48. With the support of the Government of Japan, UNITAR collaborated with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction to implement women's leadership training in tsunami-based disaster risk reduction. Coinciding with the inaugural World Tsunami Awareness Day in 2016, 28 senior female participants, selected from government and civil society organizations from 14 Pacific small island developing States — the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu — completed the nine-day training programme in Japan. In addition to strengthening participants' knowledge of disaster risk reduction and tsunami-based risk, the programme also offered skills training in critical areas such as leadership and multi-stakeholder coalitions as seen through the lens of change management. The programme also encouraged peer learning, knowledge-sharing and the formation of a community of practice among the participants.

F. Building capacity for the 2030 Agenda

49. As mentioned in the introduction to the present document, UNITAR added a sixth programme area to its 2016-2017 strategic framework, on strengthening the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and developing the capacities of national partners, including through efforts to mainstream the Agenda through national policies, programmes and plans, and to monitor and evaluate progress. Under the guidance of an advisory council, the Institute has developed innovative solutions, open-source tools and special learning support services, targeting in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, as they begin the process of mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals at the country level. The tools cover a wide range of areas: localization of the Goals and harmonization of global, regional and national commitments; strengthening of multi-stakeholder platforms; build-up of continual national reviews and development of national indicators; creation of strong monitoring and evaluation systems; and alignment of budgeting processes with the localized Goals.

50. UNITAR has produced a number of noteworthy achievements in this new programming area, including the development of national briefing toolkits, produced jointly with the United Nations Development Group, to enable national experts to act as facilitators and lead roll-out workshops on the Sustainable Development Goals in order to address the capacity needs of Governments and other stakeholders, with concrete examples of actions taken by early starters. Presently available in English, French, Russian and Spanish, the toolkits have been tested in several least developed countries in Africa and in countries in other regions. The toolkits build on the "Introduction to the 2030 Agenda: a new agenda for a sustainable world" online course, which is aimed at developing an understanding of changes required from policymakers and ordinary citizens in order

to achieve the Goals. Since its launch, the course has received registrations from 300 people, nearly half of whom have completed the requirements.

51. At the 2016 high-level political forum, UNITAR organized two learning sessions. One focused on harmonizing global, regional and national commitments to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, with discussions focusing on new types of integrated planning to reflect key commitments stemming from medium- and long-term national priority-setting exercises. The other session focused on strengthening national reviews and monitoring and evaluation systems for the Goals, with discussions focusing on the challenges related to building mechanisms to ensure regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels. The Institute also co-organized with UNDP a regional workshop on developing national evaluation capacities to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with participants from Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan and the Philippines.

52. A learning conference will be organized in March 2017 in Abuja for anglophone least developed countries on holistic approaches for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Senior government officials in charge of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in their respective countries have been invited, covering the 17 anglophone least developed countries in Africa. The objective of the conference is to provide a practical learning and knowledge-sharing space for decision makers in charge of leading the process of mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals in their Governments, or for mid-level officers tasked with supporting the Goals. The conference offers an opportunity for policy practitioners to exchange, learn and identify solutions to the immediate challenges of mainstreaming the Goals in their respective professional environments. It will take into account key issues faced by least developed countries in Africa: how to mobilize public institutions to implement the 2030 Agenda, integrated planning and policymaking, mobilization of domestic resources, monitoring and evaluation with regard to the Goals, and stakeholder engagement.

53. UNITAR is also engaged in developing a programme aimed at strengthening the capacities of national statistical offices to support improved data availability for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with an initial focus on small island developing States. Undertaken in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division, UNITAR plans to deliver an initial series of workshops for small island developing States in the Caribbean, Asia-Pacific and African regions, with a focus on the compilation of national Sustainable Development Goal indicators, the establishment of baselines and the improvement of data collection and dissemination. It is expected that this programme will also help in the future to strengthen the capacities of national statistical offices to use data from new sources, thus filling in critical data gaps in a number of areas.

III. Towards a new strategic framework

54. The Institute has been engaged in a process to articulate the next strategic framework covering the period 2018-2021. Over the past six months, UNITAR has laid the groundwork for this planning exercise, which has resulted in a six-point vision statement, focusing on growth, modernization, innovation, quality assurance, visibility and openness and inclusivity, along with a concept paper entitled "The UNITAR we want", which outlines how the Institute intends to reorganize itself internally to best respond to the new framework for international cooperation. At its fifty-seventh session, in November 2016, the Institute's Board of Trustees welcomed with appreciation those two documents and, on that basis, requested the

Institute's management to prepare the strategic framework covering the period 2018-2021.

55. The Institute will give high priority to the principles enshrined in the outcomes of the conferences held in 2015, including the need for strengthened partnerships, and whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first. At the Institute's core, programmes will continue to be the drivers in achieving development results. In contrast to past practice, whereby a large number of programmes operated independently, programmes will be clustered under four thematic pillars, in close alignment with the 2030 Agenda: peaceful and just societies; prosperity through economic development; people and social inclusion; and planet, environmental protection, restoration and climate change. The Institute's existing programming in the areas of strengthening multilateralism, satellite applications and capacity-building support relating to the 2030 Agenda, as well as programming delivered by the Institute's satellite offices in Hiroshima, Japan; New York; and Port Harcourt, Nigeria, will work across all pillars in a more coherent manner to add value, mainstream expertise and strengthen programmatic delivery in terms of breadth and depth of training content, impact and audience.

56. Given the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, it is important to emphasize that neither the thematic pillars nor the crosscutting dimensions will be monolithic or work in isolation. Indeed, an inherent characteristic of the Agenda is its integrated and interconnected nature. While the moving forward of some programming may reflect a highly sector- or Goal-specific approach, UNITAR programming will increasingly manifest cross-sectoral integrated approaches to achieving results.

57. The proposed new working system will also include four important functional components, each of which will provide strategic inputs to the Office of the Executive Director and regularly service the programming core: resource mobilization and partnerships; strategic planning, performance monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance and learning support; strategic communications; and operations, which comprises administration and procurement, human resources, finance and budget and information technology.

58. In terms of beneficiary reach, UNITAR will focus increasingly on "reaching the furthest first" by working to address the learning and broader capacity development needs of beneficiaries from countries in special situations. During the 2014-2015 biennium, participants from least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, for instance, accounted for 40 per cent of all training-related beneficiaries (and approximately 50 per cent of all beneficiaries from developing countries). While these figures are in keeping with the Institute's targeted beneficiary reach, small island developing States are often left behind, with beneficiaries from those States accounting for only 3.5 per cent of all training-related beneficiaries.

59. In addition to working to meet the learning and other capacity needs of those most in need, UNITAR will work to expand its portfolio by developing programming in topical areas that are either undeveloped or underdeveloped, such as disabilities, gender equality and empowerment of women, the green economy, health, migration, sustainable tourism and the prevention of violent extremism.

60. Communications will play a crucial and pivotal role in realizing the six-point vision. A new communications strategy was issued in 2016, and is designed to contribute to the overall goal of the Institute by defining the direction of the Institute's communication activities at both the corporate and programme levels, and delivering a number of specific actions to support the concretization and

implementation of the strategy and its objectives of strengthening branding, effectively delivering communication and engaging stakeholders.

61. The Institute also issued a revised resource mobilization strategy in late 2016 to guide fundraising efforts over the next five years. The overall objective of the strategy is to increase the UNITAR budget and matching revenue by an average of 6 per cent annually, which would result in an increase from the present budget of $51.3 million in the current biennium to approximately $64 million for 2020-2021. The strategy sets out seven targets and articulates key action points and initiatives that will be undertaken to achieve this overall growth objective.

IV. Financial situation of the Institute

62. The Institute's financial situation continues to be one of stability and growth. Total income for the biennium 2014-2015 was $54.2 million, representing a 25 per cent increase over 2012-2013 figures of $43.2 million.

63. The Institute continues to be heavily reliant on a small number of donors; the top 10 donors contributed 72 per cent of total donor contributions for the year 2015. UNITAR has concluded several multi-year agreements with partners, significantly increasing its balance of receivables. Voluntary contributions to the General Fund have also increased significantly, owing largely to a strategic partnership with the Government of Algeria which was initiated in 2013. Over the course of the 2014-2015 biennium, Algeria provided more than $2.26 million in voluntary contributions to the General Fund. UNITAR welcomes the continued engagement and support of the Government of Algeria going forward.

64. Overall, UNITAR remains in sound financial health. Its accumulated surpluses increased from $16.0 million in 2014 to $21.0 million in 2015, which resulted from a reported surplus for the year of $1.9 million and a reduction of $3.1 million in the actuarial valuation of post-employment liabilities. Key financial ratios that measure the liquidity position of the organization have improved, owing predominantly to the holding of only short-term investments and an increase in voluntary contributions receivable from the signing of multi-year agreements. These ratios also confirm that there are sufficient net assets to meet both its short-term and longer-term liabilities.

65. Until 2015, the accounting records of UNITAR were maintained on the Integrated Management Information System of the United Nations, which was administered by the United Nations Office at Geneva. After approval had been obtained from the Institute's Board of Trustees in December 2014, a business case was submitted to the Office of the Controller of the United Nations for formally adopting the Atlas enterprise resource planning system administered by UNDP. The Institute received an unqualified audit opinion of its financial statements from the United Nations Board of Auditors.

V. Recommendations

66. It is recommended that Member States commend the Institute for its growth in beneficiaries since 2014 and welcome the new strategic direction that UNITAR is taking in order to make a meaningful, cost-effective and impactful contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

67. It is also recommended that UNITAR continue its efforts to respond to learning and other capacity needs in accordance with its mandate and the outcomes of relevant international conferences, such as the Third International Conference on

Financing for Development, the twenty-first and twenty-second sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. It is further recommended that Member States and other stakeholders, including relevant United Nations entities, strengthen partnerships with the Institute, given its expertise in the fields of learning, applied research and satellite mapping.

68. It is recommended that Member States encourage UNITAR to align with the ongoing reforms of the United Nations development system, including in the finalization of its new strategic framework for 2018-2021, with a view to enhancing effectiveness, efficiency and coherence.